



Laboratory announces selection of Venture Acceleration Fund recipients

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LOS ALAMOS, New Mexico, March 8, 2010—Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) has selected Simtable and Southwest Bio Fuels as recipients of \$100,000 awards from the Los Alamos National Security, LLC Venture Acceleration Fund.

The Laboratory's Venture Acceleration Fund invests in creating and growing Northern New Mexico businesses that have an association with LANL technology or expertise. Venture Acceleration Fund investments help the companies and their technologies reach the next level of success through proof-of-concept, prototyping, securing initial customers, or additional funding.

"The primary driver for LANS's investments in the region through the Venture Acceleration Fund is to reduce the commercialization risk inherent in technology-based small businesses striving valiantly for job retention and growth," said Steve Girrens, the Laboratory's Technology Transfer Division leader.

The Venture Acceleration Fund is an initiative of Northern New Mexico Connect, the principal economic development investment arm of LANS and Los Alamos National Laboratory.

Simtable is a technology developed for wildfire training, incident command, and community outreach that combines hardware and software to create simulations on sand. In the past, firefighters have modeled their response to a fire by moving matchbox cars and pieces of yarn on a tabletop filled with sand, using the sand to represent the landscape. With Simtable, Google Earth and GIS data are projected onto the sand surface, allowing the user to hand-model the terrain elevation. Changes in the sand surface are an interactive part of the model, so that if a fire is simulated in the sand, the model will show where it is most likely to spread, as well as where traffic will backlog during an evacuation.

Simtable's \$100,000 Venture Acceleration Fund award will be used to improve the user interface for its hardware and software, market and advertise the product, and seed firefighting academies with Simtable's and hardware and software set ups customized for the curriculum.

Simtable Chief Technology Officer Stephen Guerin said, "Venture Acceleration Fund support is allowing us to move research developed at the Santa Fe Complex out of a lab environment and into the market for real-world validation. We're excited to receive not only the funding but also to benefit from the expertise of the whole Northern New Mexico Connect team to help us build a marketable product."

The Santa Fe company participated in the New Mexico Small Business Assistance program, working with Los Alamos National Laboratory scientist Rohan Loveland on machine vision algorithms. Simtable's project team includes Chas Curtis, Stephen Guerin, and Chip Garner.

Southwest Bio Fuels is a veteran-owned business and one of the only biodiesel manufacturers in New Mexico. The company chemically alters waste vegetable oil into biodiesel. Southwest Bio Fuels was awarded \$100,000 from Venture Acceleration Fund to increase its production rate by purchasing and installing new equipment for retooling its existing plant in Albuquerque. The production increase will enable the company to meet the demand of in-state customers, such as the city of Albuquerque and the state of New Mexico. Both currently purchase their biofuels from the Midwest.

"In July 2010, all municipal and state governments will be required to use a 5 percent biodiesel blend," explains co-owner Nathan Gonzales. "The Venture Acceleration Fund award will enable us to upscale and meet this new demand, while saving governments 15 to 20 cents per gallon in distribution alone."

Through the New Mexico Small Business Assistance program, Southwest Bio Fuels has received assistance from Los Alamos National Laboratory's Bioscience Division on a specific technology that speeds up biofuel production. Southwest Bio Fuel's team includes Nathan and Eddie Gonzales and the Bioscience Division at Los Alamos National Laboratory, led by Greg Goddard.

For more information about the Venture Acceleration Fund, New Mexico Small Business Assistance, and Northern New Mexico Connect, visit www.nnmconnect.net.

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